

What is claimed:

1. A method of supervising personal exposure to a consumer electronics device, the method comprising:

5 receiving a program signal suitable for conversion by the consumer electronics device into user discernible information;

receiving a content-based indicator indicative of the content of the user discernible information;

receiving timing information indicative of a reference time;

10 selecting a content-based specification;

selecting a finite time range specification associated with the selected content-based specification;

comparing the selected content-based specification with received content-based indicator when the reference time falls within the finite time range specification; and

15 generating a control signal based on the comparison between the selected content-based specification and the received content-based indicator.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the content-based indicator is carried by the program signal.

20 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the content-based indicator and the timing information are carried by the program signal.

25 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the timing information is generated within the consumer electronics device.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the reference time indicated by the timing information is the current time.

30 6. The method of claim 1, wherein each of the received content-based indicator and the selected content-based specification is a rating.

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7. The method of claim 6, wherein the control signal is generated if the received ~~content-based rating exceeds the selected content-based rating.~~

5 8. The method of claim 1, wherein each of the received content-based indicator and the selected content-based specification is a subject matter category.

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9. The method of claim 8, wherein the control signal is generated if the received content-based category matches the selected content-based category.

10. The method of claim 1, further comprising impairing the program signal in response to the control signal.

15 11. The method of claim 10, wherein the program signal is blocked in response to the control signal.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the consumer electronics device is a television system and the user discernible information comprises audio/video information.

20 13. A method of supervising the exposure to a consumer electronics device, the method comprising:

receiving a program signal suitable for conversion by the consumer electronics device into user discernible information;

25 receiving a content-based rating indicative of the content of the user discernible information;

receiving a timing signal indicative of a reference time;

selecting a first content-based rating;

selecting a first finite time range specification associated with the first content-based rating;

30 comparing the first selected content-based rating with the received content-based rating when the reference time falls within the first finite time range specification; and

impairing the program signal if the received content-based rating exceeds the first selected content-based rating.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the program signal is impaired by scrambling
5 the program signal.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein the program signal is impaired by blocking the program signal.

16. The method of claim 13, wherein the selected time range specification repeats for
10 each day of a workweek.

17. The method of claim 13, further comprising:
15 selecting a second content-based rating different from the first selected content-based rating;
selecting a second finite time range specification associated with the second selected content-based rating;
comparing the second selected content-based rating with the received content-based rating when the reference time falls within the second finite time range specification; and
20 impairing the program signal if the received content-based rating exceeds the second selected content-based rating.

18. The method of claim 13, further comprising:
selecting a second finite time range specification associated with the first selected
25 content-based rating; and
comparing the first selected content-based rating with the received content-based rating when the reference time falls within the second finite time range specification.

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30 19. A recordable medium comprising:
~~a computer program comprising steps for:~~

receiving a program signal suitable for conversion by a consumer electronics device into user discernible information;

receiving a content-based indicator indicative of the content of the user discernible information;

5 receiving timing information indicative of a reference time;

selecting a content-based specification;

selecting a finite time range specification associated with the selected content-based specification;

10 comparing the selected content-based specification with received content-based indicator when the reference time falls within the finite time range specification; and

generating a control signal based on the comparison between the selected content-based specification and the received content-based indicator.

20. The recordable medium of claim 19, wherein each of the received content-based indicator and the selected content-based specification is a rating.

Sub 25 21. The recordable medium of claim 20, wherein the control signal is generated if the received content-based rating exceeds the selected content-based rating.

20 22. The recordable medium of claim 19, wherein each of the received content-based indicator and the selected content-based specification is a subject matter category.

Sub 26 23. The recordable medium of claim 22, wherein the control signal is generated if the received content-based category matches the selected content-based category.

25 24. The recordable medium of claim 19, wherein the control signal is generated to impair the program signal.

Sub 27 30 25. A consumer electronics device having "V-chip" circuitry for supervising personal exposure to user discernible information, comprising:

non-volatile memory configured for receiving a content-based specification and a finite time range specification;

a logic unit coupled to the non-volatile memory and being configured for comparing a content-based indicator with the content-based specification when a reference time falls within the finite time range specification, the logic unit being further configured for generating a control signal in response to the comparison between the content-based indicator and the content-based specification;

a signal impairment mechanism coupled to the logic unit and configured for, based on the control signal, selectively passing a program signal therethrough without substantial impairment or passing the program signal therethrough with substantial impairment.

26. The consumer electronics device of claim 25, further comprising an output device coupled to the signal impairment mechanism for transforming the program signal into the user discernible information.

27. The consumer electronics device of claim 25, further comprising a data entry system for selectively inputting the content-based specification and associated finite time range specification into the non-volatile memory for storage.

28. The consumer electronics device of claim 25, wherein the non-volatile memory includes a look-up list for storing a plurality of content-based specifications and associated finite time range specifications.

29. The consumer electronics device of claim 25, wherein the program signal carries the content-based indicator and reference time, and further comprising a data extraction device coupled to the logic unit for extracting the content-based indicator and reference time from the program signal.

30. The consumer electronics device of claim 25, wherein the signal impairment device is a switch.

31. The consumer electronics device of claim 25, wherein the output device is a television system audio/video output device.

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